

[11.]

Some REMARKS
UPON A
SPEECH
MADE TO THE
GRAND JURY
For the County of MIDDLESEX,
CONCERNING THE
Execution of PENALTIES
UPON THE
Churches of Christ,

Which worship God in MEETING-HOUSES,
For their so doing.

And may serve for an Answer to part of the Order of the
JUSTICES, Jan. 13. to the same purpose.

In a Letter to Sir W. S. their Speaker.

*For all the Law is fulfilled in one word, in this, Thou shalt love thy
Neighbour as thy self.*

*But if ye bite and devour one another, Take heed that you be not consumed
one of another, Gal. 5. 14, 15.*

**But it is evident by the sad experience of Twelve Years,
that there is very little fruit of all those forceable courses,
[many and frequent ways of coercion.]**

Kings Declaration, March 15. 1672.

LONDON, Printed for *Elea. Harris.* 1682.

NO. 1

THE

OF

AND

THE

THE

THE

THE

THE

THE

THE

THE

THE

THE

THE

THE

THE

THE

THE

THE

THE

THE

THE

THE

SIR,

SINCE Your Speech made at the Session of the Peace, to the Grand Jury there, is by your, and the rest of the Justices Order Printed and Published, I hope you will not take it ill, that a private person gives his Opinion concerning it, especially considering, that your modesty has premised, you should *discover that weakness which by your silence might have been concealed.*

Sir, As for that worthy Character you give of your self, your Generosity and Publick Spirit abstracted from all private *considerations whatsoever*, Your proof and protestation of it, I have this to say, that you are to me much a stranger. I am unwilling to make enquiry into your life and actions, and therefore shall give as much credit to what you say, as one can reasonably give to him that praiseth himself — but could not vindicate himself in the Eyes of the Commons of England in Parliament : Otherwise I should have wondred that a Gentleman (who had approv'd himself to his Country, by the experience of so great a number of years, and in two Parliaments of such different qualifications (wherein every Member was tryed oftner and more severely than the purest Gold) of such excellent Integrity, Parts and Vertues, should be neglected in the Three late Parliaments. The Country is not wont in these cases to cast off those that have done them eminent Services; sure I am there was a very great number of the same persons in all these Parliaments, and in the greatest honour and esteem by those that elected them, and by others also.

In the next Paragraph, you tell us, *This Kingdom is at present under very sad circumstances*; and upon enquiry into the cause, you say (and I think boldly enough) *we have lost the Jewel of Government.* I perceive Sir W.S. may say what he pleases; but I doubt it would have been dangerous for a Grand Inquest to have writ *Billa vera* upon such a presentment. What ! His Majesty upon the Throne in Peace, and yet the Government lost ! It is dreadful, like *Belshazzar's* Hand writing upon the Wall. *Mene Mene, God hath numbred thy Kingdom and finished it.* I hope Sir, you are no skilful State Physician : God forbid you should in this Diagnosticsk. You may if you please see more to this matter in the *Courant* of Dec. 23. I expected next the proof of your Assertion, but you defer that, and tell

us of our Princes mercy in the *Act of Oblivion*. I suppose there's no man in *England*, that understands things to any purpose, that is not sensible of His Majesties Grace in the *Act of Oblivion*, wherein he had the counsel of his Parliament; but there are a sort of Men that labour much to turn the *Act of Oblivion* into an *Act of Remembrance*; there's no Act that ever the King Pass'd, more grievous to them than that; and the reason is not, because the King has Pardoned His Enemies, but because they cannot by his power wreck their malice upon their hated Neighbours. I am perswaded Sir, when you consider the sad state of the Kingdom better, you will find that Mensenvy at their Neighbours Liberty and Enjoyments, and a strange ill will they foster against them, is the great cause of our sad Divisions. It is not because the Government is lost, but because it is not lost, that men rage as they do. There are not a few who long for nothing more than the confusion of the Government; for they reckon that the only way to effect their Revenge, than which nothing would more rejoice their hearts. Nay, they could well be content to undergo the hazards of a Combustion in prospect of the Satisfaction they hope for in conclusion, by the Ruine of their Maligned Neighbours and Countrymen. And the true reason why they believe so little of the *Popish Plot*, is because the Discovery of it justifies the fears of those they have so long scorn'd upon that account. I must acknowledge the *Papists* and their dissembeling Agents have wrought strongly upon these passions, and have at length rais'd them to such a height, that, in my Opinion, they cannot be allayed without a Parliament, which I take to be a part of the Government. But if a *Popish* Successor come first, (which God of his great mercy prevent) I cannot think that those enraged People, who have already made use of Subornations and Perjuries to shed blood by, will stick at a *Parisian Bartholomew Feast*, if they can find no readier way of destroying those they hate.

You go on in setting forth the Goodness of His Majesties Government (which is an odd way of shewing the Government to be lost.) *He takes nothing from any man, doth not oppress the meanest of His Subjects, nor interposeth His Authority to obstruct Justice.* We joyfully grant all this, and more concerning the King; but we cannot excuse his Ministers; your last long Parliament found cause to complain of divers Publick Grievances, to provide Laws against some, and to charge one Great Man with High Treason in many particulars.

Next you tell us, the mischief of the loss of the Government, but all your instances, instead of proving we have no Government, prove the quite contrary, that we have a good Government. *For no man can take a pair of Shoes or anything else out of a Shop, without payment, but he is punished for it, if he can be found out, and no Government can punish those that are conceal'd*

ceas'd, Bene vixit, qui bene latuit. Nor can any man pass through Lombard Street, and supply his Pockets without good consideration. Indeed we have heard of some that took a great many Hundred Thousand Pounds out of Lombard Street upon good consideration, which was afterwards made invalid; but His Majesty was graciously pleas'd to grant an Equivalent; but I read in some Publick Prints, of obstructions in the issuing of that Equivalent, which yet I am far from imputing to the King, but know not how to defend all his Ministers.

In the beginning of your next Period you tell us, that *God Almighty knew this* [the calamities of being without Government] *when he created man, and therefore gave him a Law by which he should live and govern himself and printed it in his heart called the Law of Nature, &c.* This is a surprising way of discourse; for the natural import of it is this, *Viz.* That to prevent the mischief of being without Government, God had made every man his own Governor; so that he has no need of any other Government. Again, It proceeds somewhat incoherently: *God knew when he created man what evils he would incur notwithstanding the Law of Nature in his heart, if there was not also an outward Government; therefore he gave him the Law of Nature, and printed it in his heart.* I suppose Sir, you spake extemporary, but I then wonder you should be against extemporary Prayers and extemporary Sermons, and use an extemporary Speech upon such a Solemn Occasion.

You proceed, *If man had attended to this Law, there would have been no contentions or quarrels, no nor fears and jealousies, which are the Devils Engines to batter down the peace of the World; but the Devil made man forget his God — and grow to such wickedness, that God swept them away by an universal Deluge, &c.* Here is a special remark upon *Fears and Jealousies* in the Old World: but I find no such mentioned in the Holy History; it was past that, *The Mighty Men* executed according to their Lusts, so that the Earth was filled with violence effectually, and if they feared it before it came upon them, they had cause enough, and those fears were not in vain. It seems it was in your mind to expose the Phrase of *Fears and Jealousies*, and therefore you must needs bring it in here by Head and Shoulders. But if you please to call to mind some of the Addresses of your Loyal Long Parliament, you will find they did not abhor from such like expressions. In their Address against the Duke of York's
 Octo. 31. Marriage, they pray His Majesty *To relieve his good subjects from*
 1673. *those fears and apprehensions which they ly under, from the progress had been made in the Treaty.* And they further say, *We greatly*
fear, &c. That for another Age at the least, this Kingdom will be under con-
tinual apprehensions of the Growth of Popery, and the danger of the Prote-
stant Religion.

In their Address of *March 1671* they advise His Majesty, *That for the satisfying the minds of his good Subjects, who are much disquieted with the apprehensions of the dangers arising to this Kingdom from the Growth and Power of the French King, &c.* I could cite you more of this kind, but my resolved brevity hinders.

Thus Sir, You were a Member of that Loyal House of Parliament, which had the Presumption to tell His Majesty *of the Fears and Jealousies of his good Subjects*: but what is the matter now, after a horrid Popish Plot against His Majesty, and a great many Plots against his good Subjects, that now it must be a breach of the Peace to talk of *Fears and Jealousies*? I fear Sir, you have taken it ill you were not chosen in these late Parliaments, and that you are fallen out both with Parliament and People upon that score.

You go on: *This Rebellion [of Corah] you may observe as all other Rebellions almost that I have heard of, began upon the pretence of Religion and Liberty.* Here you have a mind to expose the *Terms of Religion and Liberty*, as before you did *Fears and Jealousies*, and you pick out the Rebellion of *Corah*, as a singular instance of the prevalence of the Devil in that Tract of time between *Noah* and our blessed Saviour: One would have thought that the Kings of *Egypt* keeping in Bondage, and evil entreating the Children of *Israel* Four Hundred years together, who at last commanded the Male Infants to be killed, and upon their demand in the name of the Lord God, and upon their petition to him for liberty of Religion, increased their affliction and bondage, forcing them to *make Bricks without Straw*, and still exalting the same Tale of *Bricks as before*, beating them if they performed it not; and the King said, *Ye are idle, ye are idle, therefore ye say, Let us go and do Sacrifice to the Lord.* And *Pharaoh* hardened his heart to such a degree, that God raised him up or made him stand to shew his power, and that his Name might be declared throughout all the Earth. One would have thought I say, that this example of Wickedness against the Law of Nature, and Gods stupendious Vengeance that pursued the *Egyptians* to almost their utter destruction for the same, should have been as ready to your mind as the Rebellion of *Corah*; I hope you do not think that *Moses* and the People of *Israel*, being Subjects to *Pharaoh*, were therefore Rebels for being of another Religion, and craving liberty upon that account. But now I think on't, this of *Corah* was brought in as an instance of great Sin after the Law of Nature was written in two Tables; but he must be wonderfully sagacious, that can find in the Law of Nature or Ten Commandments, that the Priesthood was to be entailed to the Sons of *Aaron*, and none else of *Levi's* Family, of which *Corah* was. Under favour, I think this was a Rebellion against a special Revelation as *Saul's* also was, when he destroyed not King *Agag* and the

Cattle with the *Aualekites*, 1 Sam. 15. A proper example is this of *Corah*, to be urged by the Pope against those Princes and others that Rebel against him as High Priest upon earth of all Gods People. But Religion and Rebellion must be made to depend one upon another: a neat way of making Atheists; and when all's done, I reckon it a very false Notion, *That all Rebellions almost you have heard of, began upon pretence of Religion and Liberty*; for take we but a view of the Wars and Rebellions that have been in *England* since *William the First*, and how few of them have began upon pretence of *Religion and Liberty*, in comparison with them that have been commenc'd upon pretence of Title to the Crown? The bloody Contest between the Houses of *Tork* and *Lancaster* alone lasted about a Hundred Years. And the Wars of our *English Kings* in *France*, which dured long, and brought great desolation upon that Country, had the same ground; perhaps you will not call these Rebellions except Religion had been pretended; but that were to beg the Question. And if you respect the Wars occasion'd and fomented by the Pope, he will fairly tell you that all his Wars are of a Priestly Sovereign against Rebels and Hereticks. But that which lies coucht in these two passages is, *That to fear the coming in of Popery by a Popish Successor to the subverting our Religion; and to be jealous of our Liberty from a series of Treasonous actions in great men against the Government*, is a breach of the Peace, and at least bordering upon Rebellion.

Next you are pleas'd to make merry with Appeals to the People [*Excellent Arbiters in matters relating to Government*] Methinks Sir, you come too near the Declaration against the Two last Parliaments, and manifold Addresses of the Justices and some Grand Juries and a great many Burroughs, that were easily taken with it.

You seem Sir, to be a little out in your Divinity, whilst you introduce God Almighty in Creation, *Giving Man a Law, and printing it on his heart*, and by our Lord Christ restoring that Law, by instruction, and the sending of Bishops to govern the Church by Ceremonies, and Liturgies, which have the Sanction of a Parliament, whereas Gods giving his Laws into Mens minds, and writing them in their hearts, is made both by the Prophet *Jeremy* and the Divine Author to the *Hebrews*, the special Promise and Priviledge of the New Covenant, whereof Christ is Mediator. And if Christ has not written his Laws in mens hearts by the Gospel, Sir Wm's Argument doth equally justifie all the *Papists* of *Spain*, *Italy*, *France*, &c. as the *Protestants* of the Church of *England*, and equally condemn the *Protestants* in those Countrys, as the *Dissenters* here in *England*; for they have their Bishops by a continued Succession as well as we, and they have their Ceremonies and Liturgy (called the *Mass*) as well as we; and these have the Sanction of their Parliaments, the agreement both of Kings and People, as well as ours.

ours. Thus Sir, you have made *Papery* as much the Religion of Christ as *Protestantism*, and justifie all Persecutions of Christians, that are made by Bishops and Laws. The French King is beholding to you for vindicating him in his present Persecution of the poor *Protestants*, to whom yet (thanks be to God and the King) we give entertainment.

But when you *seriously think* of, this Establishment by Bishops, and the agreement in Parliament, *It raiseth your admiration how any man can think himself hardly dealt with, when he is required to comply with that which he hath before agreed.* Pray Sir, were you never on the Negative side in any Law that was pass'd in those Parliaments wherein you sate? if you were, then you did not agree to that Law, now suppose that that Law had been the Law of conformity to the *Mass*, as it was in Queen *Maries* days, would you have thought your self obliged to have yielded obedience to it, because you were over Voted? Sir, Sanctions of King and Parliament cannot make a thing good, which in its nature is not so: neither can it make an indifferent thing lawful to me, if I in my Conscience think it: otherwise, for *whatsoever is not of Faith is sin.* Christ has not given Bishops to be Lords over his Heritage, which they will be, if you give them power to make Laws and enforce them against the Conscience of Believers, in things not necessary to be determin'd, and much less in things already otherwise determin'd in the Doctrine of Christ.

You admire again, *That any should think it reasonable that Publick Conventicles should be permitted in opposition to the said Established Government.* I have said something before that is applicable to this, to allay this admiration. I add, that many Conventiclers do think their Pastors to be Bishops *Episcopos*, or Overseers (as your self note) which they are as much obliged to obey, as if there were an Humane Law for it.

Again, Some are greatly offended at the rancour and bitterness they perceive in many high-flown Men of the Church, against those that dissent from them, who would have those severe Laws executed against them, whilst in the mean time, they are not more certain of any thing, than that they heartily desire their own Salvation, and endeavour honestly to find out, and to walk in the right way to it; and hence they are most certain it is contrary to the mind of Christ, any of his Followers should punish them for their Meeting together in his Name, in pursuance of those ends; and consequently that Church that does so, offends against a Fundamental Point of Christian Practice, for they have the like perswasion concerning the Integrity of others that differ from them, as they have of themselves, and are therefore sure, that if they be so, they can no more execute Penalties upon them, than they upon others. They ought to have the same love and respect for them, as they have for Conformists, and so do unto them as they would have them do unto themselves, if they be otherwise

otherwise minded, they offend both against the Law of nature and the Law of Christ. If either they or the Dissenters offend against the necessary Principles and Laws of Government, though it be never so much their consciences so to do, they deny not the Magistrates right to punish them: but they are certain this is none of those cases. It is an excellent passage of the late Lord Chief Justice, *Sir Matthew Hale* p. 1308. observed in his Life, relating to the Quakers; *He considered Marriage and Succession as a right of nature* (there is the same reason of other rights of nature) *from which none ought to be barred, what mistake soever they might be under in the Points of Revealed Religion.* Surely the publick meeting together to worship God is a natural right; which therefore men ought not to be deprived of, though they mistake in the circumstances of their so meeting and worshipping. But I will leave the defence of publick meetings to publick prints, specially I refer you to the *Conformists Plea for the Non-conformists*, the first and second parts; for that in reason should be read by you with less prejudice, than those things they say in their own behalf.

You cannot understand, but that the Conventiclers allow their teachers both Infallibility and Supremacy: what Sir, more then you allow to your Bishops? you would not have said this, but that you had a mind to make an odious Parallel between Papists and Dissenters. But who knows not, that Dissenters do all maintain this as the great principle of Protestantism, viz. *That every man ought to be satisfied in his own Judgment concerning his Religion, and not to pin his faith upon any man, or number of men, further than they are persuaded from the infallible word of God.* And this is the chief reason why they frequent gathered Churches, and not Parish Churches; and sometimes go from one Congregation to another, as they find it more conducing to the great end of their eternal Salvation.

You say, *The Romish Church is an united body, and not to be withstood by another united body, and if the people were united and reconciled to this true Protestant Church of England, it was not possible that Popery should prevail here.*

First Sir, The people are so far united to this Church, that they have the same Faith, and the same Doctrine for Substance; and they worship God in no other manner than is allowed by the practice of the Church of England; so that I would fain be informed what better capacity the Church of England would be in, if all come to the Parish Church, than She is now. If there was not one Protestant Dissenter in England, how would that hinder a Popish Successor from bringing in Popery? We see that under our present Protestant Prince (to whom God grant a long and happy Reign) we can scarce keep our selves from being over-run

and destroyed by Assassinations, Sham-Plots, and Suborned witnesses, with other Engines of mischiefs, to which the parish Church men, as well as others, are equally Subject: we see that even in the Church it self; they have raised a strong enmity, one against another, according as they are either more fierce against Protestants, and more moderate against Papists, or on the contrary more moderate to Protestants, and more zealous against Papists; what then would be done under a Popish Successor? should all Dissenters be reconciled to the Church, would that extinguish the animosities among the Bishops and other Clergy and Laity (as they call 'em) of the Church it self? I pray consider it.

*Witness Doctor
Fowler, & Gre-
gory Prebends of
Gloucester.*

Our Divisions, you say, give boldness to the common enemy to make attempts upon us; you say very true, for whilst he sees a party that pretends to the Church, so desperately mad against those (whether in the Church or out of it) that being deeply concerned for their Religion, King and Government, are zealous against the Papists and their Fautors, it cannot but encourage the Papists to go on in their Devilish Plots and machinations against us. Is't not wonderful, that since the discovery of a most horrid Popish plot against all Protestants, some of that name that were gentle before, should now be violent in the prosecution of their Brethren? as if the Dissenting Protestants were to be punished for the Popish plot. O unhappy *Titus*! hadst thou suffered the popish Plot to proceed to effect, thou mightest have reap't a great share in the profits of their success. But now thou hast discovered their Treachery and saved thy King and Country, thou art scorned, and reproached; thou art in jeopardy of thy life every hour, either by assassination or false accusation! And thy wretched Country is in worse circumstances to withstand the Popish and Malicious enemies of its Religion and Government than before.

The Luxury and Security of *Asia*— gave *Alexander* the Great hopes of Conquest, *Ergo*, Our worshipping of God, some in Churches, some in Meetings, encourages the *French* King: A natural consequence; Did the *French* carry on their War the worse, because they permitted *Protestants*, though at the same time they made War against *Protestants*? but he's afraid of it for the future; and must we needs tread in his steps, and act by his Policies: surely he that prosecutes *Protestants* with Penalties for being so, does the *Pope* and *French* King's Work; for what can they desire more at present? And I heartily wish *That the ill consequences, which may easily be foreseen to arise therefrom, to use your words, may prevail with men that pretend to love their King and Country, and Religion, not to be guilty of any thing that will bring ruin upon them.* For when they have

have ruined the *Dissenters*, they will next fall upon those of the *Church* that favour them, and when they are ruin'd, it will be easie for a *Papish* Successor either to turn them to *Papery*, or ruine the remainder.

As for the *Liberty* you say they have—— according to Law, of exercising Religion in their own Houses.

First, That is denied where *Protestants* are prosecuted to Confiscation of their Estates, as *Papish Recusants* for not going to Church.

And Secondly, The same Passions and Councils that now endeavour to suppress their Meetings, would then prosecute them as Rioters for meeting above Three besides the Family, to do an unlawful action, as I have known it done by some of your Bench.

It is easily said by you, rather *Humor* than *Conscience*, when they will yet offend against the Law, by these *Publick Conventicles*, [but they would be very glad to find it such an humor, as they could correct with satisfaction to Conscience; it would be a great ease to their minds, besides the advantage to their outward concerns] which are so destructive to the Peace and Safety of the Kingdom. There was a time when His Majesty was pleas'd to declare, That it was evident by the sad experience of Twelve Years, that there is very little fruit of all those forceable courses [many and frequent ways of coercion] And therefore (saith he) We do now issue this Our Declaration, as well for the quieting, of the minds of Our good Subjects in these points, far inviting Strangers, in this conjuncture, to come and live under us, and for the better encouragement of all to a chearful following of their Trades and Callings, from whence we hope, by the blessing of God, to have many good and happy advantages to our Government: As also for preventing for the future, the danger that might otherwise arise from private Meetings and Seditious Conventicles. His Majesty you see Sir W. was not then of your mind, after Twelve Years Experience and Observation, that Publick Conventicles were so destructive to the Peace and Safety of the Kingdom, but the very contrary. What tho His Majesty was graciously pleas'd to Cancel that Declaration, at the Humble Request of His Loyal Long Parliament, because it did not ground it self upon a Legal Authority; yet I hope His Majesties Reason and Judgment express'd in it, may be of weight to the Justices of *Middlesex* and *London* too; especially when the Opinion of the Commons of *England* in Parliament concurs with it; [besides who knows that if there be any Favourite at Court, who designs against the people (as there seldom wants such as cannot endure the breath of a Parliament) he or she has the recommendation of Justices, which therefore being their creatures, must serve their ill purposes? and how easie it is for one or two such Justices to get the approbation of the Bench to their nomination of Jury-Men, and then wo be to the People] for they

declare in their Vote of *Luna 10. Janu. 1680.* That it is the Opinion of this House, that the persecution of Protestant Dissenters upon the Penal Laws, is at this time grievous to the Subject, a weakening of the Protestant Interest, an encouragement to Popery, and DANGEROUS to the Peace of the Kingdom. Now I am clearly of Opinion, that the King and Commons of England together, their Judgment is rather to be taken in this matter than Sir W.S's. and all the Bench of Justices assenting.

You will say perhaps, that the *Popish Plot*, since the time of His Majesties Declaration, discover'd, has render'd them unworthy of that Toleration; I grant it, but what have the Dissenters done to confute the King's Judgment in this point; I hope that Toleration was not given for the sake of the *Papists* alone; so that because They cannot have benefit by His Majesties Reasoning, *No body else shall*; that were a hard thing to impute to our Sovereign: However it was, I presume Sir W. and his Fellow Justices did not Then put in execution the penal Statutes against Dissenters, neither for some years afterward; such Deference did they give to His Majesties reason, tho his Authority was with-drawn! Publick Conventicles were not then thought so destructive to the Peace and Safety of the Kingdom; And I know nothing the Dissenters are guilty of, but

Tempora mutantur.
But you would have
call'd it hypocrisie in a
Presbyterian to alter
his voice thus, thereasons
remaining the same.

a strong desire and earnest endeavour to keep out Popery, which they think cannot be done, if a *Popish Successor* be let in; and in this they follow the Judgment of three several Houses of Commons in Parliament. And now I am speaking of the Declaration for Indulgence, I pray Sir, what shall hinder a *Popish Successor* from setting forth such another Edict with more ample graces to the *Roman Catholicks*, whereby they shall not only have the liberty of Publick Meetings; but also access to Parish Churches, and all this by virtue of That Supreme Power in Ecclesiastical matters, which is not only inherent in him, but hath been declar'd and recogniz'd to be so by several Statutes and Acts of Parliament; as in the said Declaration; what tho His present Majesty was graciously pleas'd to recal his Declaration, do you think the *Popish Successor* would do so? And if he should command such an Indulgence, I am perswaded never a Justice of *Middlesex*, would dare (as Sir James Hales in Queen *Maries* days) to put the Laws in execution against them. Poor Sir James, who had merited highly of the Queen, yet suffer'd deeply for his Legal Zeal, and I doubt is too sad an example to be followed, however zealous men are now against Protestants.

It follows in your Speech, [*these publick conventicles*] *are not suffer'd in any Countrey or Kingdoms as I know of.* I have no measure of your knowledge, but there was not long since publish'd in English a piece, entituled: *The Religion of the Dutch*, the Author pretends himself a Protestant: what credit is to be given him I know not, but I know that in many things he gives a very exact and true account: He says p. 14. *There is an express prohibition of allowing any other Religion then the Reformed in the Provinces, and yet (saith he) we there find the publick exercise of an other Religions* [so he is pleas'd to call different meetings of those that differ in some opinions] *besides the Reformed; there are Roman Catholicks, Lutherans, Brownists, Independents, Arminians, Anabaptists, Socinians, Arrians, Enthusiasts, Quakers, Borelists, Armenians, Muscovites, Libertins and others; I suppose you will scarce find so many sorts of publick meetings here in England.*

Having thus shew'd the weakness of these reasons, upon which you built your discourse, there appears no cause why you should so pathetically *ad-jure men for Gods sake, and their own to lay aside these publick Conventicles &c.* Neither that you should say, *They are one cause and a great one of our present troubles*; or that you should invite the Bench and Grand Jury kindly to agree together in the remedy of this evil: Moreover, if according to the 9th Article of the Church of England, *these Conventicles or some of them be Congregations of faithfull men, in which the pure word of God is preached, and the Sacraments duly administred, according to Christs Ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same*; then are they, visible Churches of Christ, and they that punish them for so doing, do *unkindly agree in persecuting the Churches of Christ*, which Christians ought to be very wary of. Take heed Sir, you are not infallible.

The next thing you recommend, is the Consideration of Juries, and the Statute of 3. Hen. VIII. *An Act of Reformation of Impannels for the King*, Touching which I shall leave you to the consideration of a paper, set out some Moneths ago in an answer to a Speech of yours also printed upon this Subject. The subtilty and mighty endeavours of the Papists, to divert People from the prosecution of themselves, have rais'd a great enmity in a party or faction against the body of the people, represented in 3 Parliaments; The City of London which hath the choice of Sheriffs for London and Middlesex are careful to chuse such Sheriffs as they can trust, and that are not of that party: whereas the Justices of Middlesex or some of them by their Abhorring, Addressing and the like actions appear to be too favourable to that faction; and therefore the Citizens had rather by much the choice of Juries should be in the Sheriffs than in the partial Justices, especially at this time, when their Liberties, Lives and Religion are in such eminent danger from Sham-plots, Subornations and Perjuries, the pre-

preservation of all which concerns we owe under God and his Majesty to our honest Sheriffs. It looks strangely that out of about 50 persons of the Pannel, (against one man of which the Justices cannot object any thing that may argue *untrue demeanor* in the Sheriff in his return) the Justices should not find 13 to make a Grand Jury, without putting in other of their own nomination. I appeal to the next Parliament, whether the security and liberty of the People of England be not at this time more in danger by the Justices, than by the Sheriffs. I might observe upon other parts of your Speech: but I presume I have done enough already to shew the weakness of your reasoning. I hope you will please to consider things over again, and to pardon the freedom, taken by one that has due respects for you, and has learn'd to pass by the errors of men, being conscious of his own fallibility, but would gladly have malice and ill will rooted out.

S I R,

Your very Humble Servant

J. W.

 POST-

POSTSCRIPT.

ALL considering People will now see that Conventiclers are not punished and ruin'd for holding Conventicles, but for being zealous for the Protestant Religion and Government by advice of Parliament, against Popery and Clandestine Arbitrary Councils. Their Prosecutors know it to be so. I fear there are some Justices of the Peace and others who either by their ill management, or otherwise in the late unhappy Warrs suffer'd themselves and party to fall into the hands of their enemies, which would now under colour of Law and after oblivion take revenge upon those few of them that survive, by ruining the whole party of Non-conformists. They, like *Haman*, think it below them to crush *Mordecai* alone, except they involve the whole people of the Jews in that destruction. But let them remember there is a God that judgeth the earth: His Kingdom ruleth over all in spight of them. He can deliver, and if he will not, they suffer in a very good cause, for a good conscience toward God, and for what has been declared to be reasonable by the King, and by the Commons of England in Parliament.

F I N I S.